THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA): (a) Interlinking of Southern rivers is proposed under the Peninsular river development component of National Perspectives formulated by the Government.

(b) It is proposed to link Mahanadi to Godavari; Godavari to Krishna; Krishna to Cauvery and Cauvery to Vaigai. Also linking of the west flowing Pamba and Achankovil with the east flowing Vaigai for supplying water to the drought prone areas is proposed.

(c) and (d) The proposals are discussed at the different stages of formulation in the Technical and Administrative Committees in which the concerned States are also represented and they are modified according to the suggestions received from the States. The pre-feasibility report on the Pamba-Achankovil-Vaigai link has been sent to the States and further discussions are being held with them.

Courier Service in Private Sector

2277. SHRI DHARMANNA MONDAYYA SADUL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Courier Service in Private Sector have grown up rapidly during the last few years;

(b) whether the speed post service has also been expanded during the same period;

(c) if so, the salient feature of the speed post service; and

(d) the details of the cooperation between Private Sector and the Department of posts to further boost its functioning for the benefit of the public?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes, Sir, the Government is aware of the existence of Private Courier Services.

(b) Yes, Sir.

The Speed Post Service was introduced on 1-8-86 initially in 7 cities. Since then this service has been expanded to 60 cities under domestic speed post service and 48 countries under international speed post service.

(c) Speed Post Service is a guaranteed and time-bound delivery service and has the following unique features:

(i) *Free Pick up Service*

(ii) *Book your own article scheme*: Customer grants his own receipt and copies thereof alongwith articles are handed over to the representative of Department.

(iii) *Book Now Pay later facility*: Booking of articles without prepayment and settlement of bills on weekly basis.

(iv) *Pay Back facility*: Refund of speed post fee in case of non-delivery within the time guaranteed.

(d) Private Couriers work independently. There is no cooperation between them and the Department of Post.

[*Translation*]

Closing of Return Letter Office in Jaipur, Rajasthan

2278. SHRI GIRDHARI LAL BHARGAVA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Return Letter Office in Jaipur, Rajasthan was closed;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the present policy of the Government in respect of closing or opening of Return Letter Offices?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) No, Sir.